

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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E.O. 11652:O
5AGS: SOPN, PGOV, SY, US
SUBJECT: OFFICIALLY-INSPIRED AL-BAATH EDITORIAL CRITICAL OF US

1. WHILE CRITICISM OF US SUPPORT FOR SADAT'S INITIATIVES HAS BEEN REGULAR FEATURE OF SYRIAN MEDIA SINCE HIS TRIP TO JERUSALEM, UNUSUAL FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL CRITICIZING THE USROLE IN PARTY NEWSPAPER AL-BAATH OF JAN 25 IS MOST AUTHORITATIVE COMMENTARY TO DATE OF HOW US EFFORTS PERCEIVED BY THE LEADERSHIP. MOST OF THE THEMES CONTAINED IN THE EDITORIAL HAVE BEEN HEARD, TO SOME EXTENT BEFORE, HOWEVER, THE COLUMNIST IZZIDIN IDRIS FOCUSED AND REFINED SOME OF THE DISPARATE CHARGES
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LEVELLED AT THE US IN RECENT WEEKS.

2. IDRIS ACCUSED US OF ORCHESTRATING SUSPENSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS CN ORDER "TO PREPARE BETTER CONDITIONS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE PROCESS AFTER ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION HAS SUBSIDED." NEUTRALIZING SYRIAN AND PLO OPPOSITION WAS SAID TO BE THE MAIN CONCERN OF THE US BECAUSE THEIR OPPOSITION COULD LEAD

TO THE FAILURE OF "THE AMERICAN-ISRAELI SCHEME." US, HE SAID, FELT THAT IF SADAT CONTINUED "WITH HIS RASH DRIVE" THEN IT MIGHT CAUSE THE COALESCING OF A STRONG OPPOSING ARAB-SOVIET ALLIANCE.

3. IN VIEW OF THIS IL COLUMNIST PREDICTED THE US WOULD PURSUE THE FOLLOWING THREE TACTICS:

A) IT WOULD SIRFAL SADAT AND ISRAEL TO HARDEN THEIR POSITIONS IN ORDER TO PERMIT SADAT TO APPEAR AS UPHOLDING ARAB RIGHTS PARTICULARLY ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. THIS WAS SEEN AS PAVING THE WAY FOR ARAB MEDIATION ATTEMPTS BETWEEN EGYPT ON THE ONE HAND AND HER OPPONENTS. SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS, ON THE OTHER. THIS TACTIC EMPLOYED TO WEAKEN THE "ARAB STEADFASTNESS FRONT."

B) IT WOULD WORK CLANDESTINELY TO EXACERBATE INTER-ARAB DISPUTES IN LEBANON, THE MAGHREB, AND ESPECIALLY "TO PREVENT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IRAQI-SYRIAN COOPERATION."

C) IT WOULD TRY THROUGH DIPLOMATIC MEANS AND CONCESSIONS ON OTHER ISSUES TO BLUNT SOVIET AND EUROPEAN OPPOSITION IN ORDER TO DENY SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB STATES THEIR ACTIVE SUPPORT.

4. THE COLUMNIST FURTHER PREDICTED THAT PHONY US-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES WOULD SURFACE AND BE ACTED OUT IN THE "ZIONIST INFORMED OFFICIAL USE

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MATION MEDIA." HE CONCLUDED THAT TO THWART THESE PLANS IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT "THE ENEMY CAN ONLY BE DETERRED BY MEANS OF THE VERY FORCE IT USES, AND THAT ARAB SOLIDARITY IS THE ONLY MEANS TO REGAIN THE USURPED RIGHTS AND REALIZE PEACE."

5. COMMENT: DESPITE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE CHARGES, THE WRITER REFRAINED FROM USING PEJORATIVE TERMS TO DESCRIBE THE US OR ITS LEADERS. THE VIEWS IZZIDIN IDRISSE EXPRESSED IN THIS FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL MIMICED A CONVERSATION US JOURNALIST HAD WITH MININFO AHMAD ISKANDAR AHMAD ON THE PREVIOUS DAY. AHMAD SEEMED TO BELIEVE SINCERELY THAT WHAT WAS OCCURRING WAS ESSENTIALLY A REPLAY OF THE EVENTS WHICH CULMINATED IN SADAT'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE SYRIAN-VILIFIED SINAI II AGREEMENT. THIS EDITORIAL WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY INSPIRED BY AHMAD AND/OR SOMEONE AT THE PRESIDENCY.

MURPHY

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